

A Ghostly Experience.

By Sam Davis.

I could never conceive how men of seeming intelligence could deliberately sit down and write ghost stories merely as a literary diversion and for the sake of harrowing the feelings of the reader.

A ghost story, no matter how entertaining it may be, if a pure fabrication has no business in print for the world is full of people so credulous in disposition that the most absurd things, if told with a serious air, are apt to be accepted as the truth, and the gross errors, foisted upon the public by careless invention, become perpetuated as established facts.

I make these observations that the reader may become acquainted with my views upon subjects supernatural at the beginning of the narrative.

The time was winter, and the scene of the manifestation a lonely moor lying between the city of Carson, which is the capital of Nevada, and the small farm where for some years past I have raised hay, cattle and a small family.

A political function had kept me out rather late, and I was driving home after midnight.

The night was clear and starlit, with snow on the ground and the air somewhat nipping in its disposition.

When about half way home having still two miles to go, I gradually became aware that something had happened to my buggy, for it seemed to run with less noise than usual. In Nevada the wheels of vehicles shrink from the dryness of the atmosphere, coupled with the indifference of their owners and mine were no exception to the rule. There was always more or less space between the tire and the felloe, and the wags of the city had a way of saying that my approach was always heralded by an infernal clatter which betokens a careless man with all his buggy wheels out of repair.

It seemed to me suddenly that something like 25 per cent of the usual clatter of the vehicle had ceased, and I was at a loss to understand why. The feeling came over me so strongly that something unusual had transpired that I hesitated to ascertain the cause. An ill defined feeling of dread was upon me, and I blush to confess it, I really feared to look around. Finally, by a strong effort, I summoned my courage, and, glancing back, was astonished to discover that the off hind wheel of my buggy had disappeared.

What was more, the vehicle did not seem to mind it, but ran as level as ever. The cessation of the clatter which that wheel always produced was now explained, but the continued level running of the buggy was not. An awful creepy feeling now came over me that almost amounted to a pain, and in the midst of my wonderment the noise of another wheel stopped, and I knew that it had followed its predecessor. The two hind wheels were gone. I deliberately turned about and investigated. Here I was running along on an even keel, nautically speaking, with nothing but my two front wheels to go on.

As I was considering the probability of the others going, I noticed a dim, hazy thing

hanging to the hub of my off front wheel. I speak in a horsey sense, after the manner of followers of the turf, for in reality the wheel was still on. The outlines of the thing alluded to gradually became more distinct and resolved itself into the figure of a human being, and as sure as I was alive it was trying to take off the nut of the axle. More fully to illustrate the impudence of the shadowy individual in question, I will further state that my nut wrench was missing and he had evidently taken it to remove the wheels of my own buggy.

I watched him now with more interest than fear, for it occurred to me that after two wheels were gone it did not matter much about the others, and I determined to see the incident to the end.

In less time than I have taken to tell it this ghostly thing actually removed the nut before eyes, and then, throwing its weight on the wheel—if I may be allowed to make use of the word weight in such a connection—the wheel and the ghost rolled over together in the sagebrush. In spite of the weirdness of the situation I was obliged to give vent to a little chuckle, the first intimation I had given the ghost of a knowledge of his presence.

The familiarity which I had indulged in with the strange little fellow seemed to enrage him for he immediately became more in evidence, and, slipping around on the near side of the buggy—speaking again in a horsey sense—he fell to work rapidly at the wheel, and circumventing the mechanical difficulties of the nut with very little trouble, he had the wheel spinning into the sagebrush in short order.

As I half expected, the ghost made a dive for the remaining wheel and fell to work upon the nut. I was glad to see that it did not come off easily. It was never a very good fit for the thread of the axle, and I recalled many a time when in a hurry how I was really compelled to indulge in unbecoming language before it could be started.

I looked for the ghost to indulge in a little flow of expletives, but it patiently continued work until it succeeded and then triumphantly flung the wheel aside and left me riding along in a buggy that seemed held up in the air with no

wheels running under it.

To a person who has never ridden in a vehicle under those peculiar circumstances, I can truthfully say that it is a rare treat.

There was no noise except the footfall of the horse. The entire absence of jar was something particularly pleasant. According to my way of thinking it was an ideal method of locomotion.

Strange as it may seem, I no longer had any fear of the flitting thing of the air that hovered alongside the horse, and I decided once more to break the ice of conversation, and called out: "A pleasant evening stranger."

At this he turned, and, floating up to my side, brought his face so close to mine that I felt his breath.

It came to me like a blast from the Klondike, and seemed to freeze me to the bone. I regretted that I had spoken for he sent his icy exhalation thrice into my face and each time it seemed colder. I tried to detect the charnel house smell that always goes with a ghost, but feel bound to say that peculiar odor was absent. I will, however, state for the benefit of the reader, that I was suffering from a bad cold, which to some extent may account for my inability to detect it.

While I was wondering what would happen next, it happened before I knew it. I suddenly found myself on the other side of the big gate that bars the road about a quarter of a mile from my house. The gate is always kept shut, and it is a great bother to open it, but on this occasion, just as I was about to halt to unfasten it, I found that I was already through. The fact of being on the other side of a gate was something altogether novel to me, and no one who has not had the actual experience can possibly get any idea of the extraordinary sensation of being on the other side of a gate when you are quite well assured in your own mind that you never got there.

Rather than involve myself in a maze of complications or contradictions I will consider the gate incident closed, and pass on to the other extraordinary things that happened between the gate and the house.

Before proceeding a hundred

yards I became aware of the circumstance that the various parts of the harness were melting away. The collar and hames dissolved into nothingness, the bridle was whisked into space, the tugs followed suit and the traces did not even leave their own name behind. Yet in spite of this the vehicle moved right along as before, and turned up the winding path toward the stable as well as if everything was in its normal condition and my own hand was guiding the lines.

When it came to a halt under the shed I got out and went to bed quietly, not mentioning the events of the night to my spouse as I did not care to harrow her feelings with such uncanny subjects.

In the morning, however, while the matter was still fresh in my memory, I told her everything that had happened, and expressed my determination to write a full account of the same and forward it over my signature to some scientific journal, that these strange happenings might not be lost to the world. Her only reply was to inquire the time of my arrival home and my retirement to bed. I definitely fixed the hour at one o'clock, which she disputed at once, and I dropped the subject, not caring for unprofitable controversy with a woman I knew in my own mind, however, the absolute correctness of my statement regarding the hour, as I distinctly remembered having heard the clock strike one no less than four times in succession. So satisfied was I that such a plain mathematical demonstration would be lost upon her, being but a woman, as I have before remarked, I did not mention it.

Later on she called my attention to the fact that the harness which I had described as having vanished into the night was in reality piled at the foot of the bed, and that my clothes were hanging on a peg in the stable. This was indeed to my mind a strong corroboration of my story, but she did not so regard it, and was unkind enough to suggest that when I sent my account of it to a scientific journal I should mention also that I had attended a banquet the evening before, given in honor of the election of a United States senator from Nevada, where more than 50 cases of cham-

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pagne had been consumed prior to the time that I had been called upon to a toast. I mention the circumstance as requested, although the connection between it and my strange experience on the lonely moor is not apparent to me.

In revising my manuscript I notice that it mentions the removal by the ghost of five separate wheels from the buggy, which may be regarded by some as an inaccuracy. A gentleman for whose opinions I have always entertained the highest regard has suggested to me that, for the sake of lending greater plausibility to my narrative, I omit all mention of the appearance—or, more properly speaking, the disappearance of the fifth wheel. I must decline, however, to do this. My chief object in making this statement is to tell the thing as it really occurred, and not to fall into the pernicious habit, too common, I regret to say, with many writers of the present day, of sacrificing essential details in order to deceive the reader with a fictitious showing of plausibility.—Chicago Daily Record.

Drew the Color Line.
Miss Zipporah Marcella Joseph, a colored girl, ranks all others in the graduating class at the manual training high school, Denver, and there fore should be valedictorian. Her classmates do not like this idea, and are supported in thus drawing the color line by some members of the faculty. The matter has assumed a phase threatening to cause serious trouble in the school.